State Compensatory Education Program: 2007-2008

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At-a-Glance

The purpose of the State Compensatory Education (SCE) program is to reduce the dropout rate and increase academic performance of students identified as at-risk of dropping out of school. In 2001, the number of eligible students increased when the Texas Legislature broadened the definition. Districts began implementing the program under the new definition in the 2001-2002 school year. Texas Education Code (TEC) Section 29.081 defines the State criteria used to identify students at-risk of dropping out of school.

Definition of At-Risk

A student at-risk of dropping out of school is a student who is under 21 years of age and who:

- is in grades PK-3 and did not perform satisfactorily on a readiness test or assessment instrument administered during the current school year;
- is in grades 7-12 and did not maintain an average equivalent to at least 70 on a scale of 100 in two or more subjects in the foundation curriculum during a semester in the preceding or current school year or is not maintaining such an average in two or more subjects in the foundation curriculum in the current semester;
- was not advanced from one grade level to the next for one or more school years;
- did not perform satisfactorily on an assessment instrument administered under TEC Chapter 30, Subchapter B, and has not in the previous or current school year subsequently performed on that instrument or another appropriate instrument at a grade level equal to at least 110 percent of the level of satisfactory performance on that instrument;
- is pregnant or is a parent;
- has been placed in an alternative education program in accordance with TEC §37.006 during the preceding or current school year;
- has been expelled in accordance with TEC §37.007 during the preceding or current school year;
- is currently on parole, probation, deferred prosecution, or other conditional release;
- was previously reported through PEIMS to have dropped out of school;
- is a student of limited English proficiency as defined by TEC §29.052;
- is in the custody or care of the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services or has, during the current school year, been referred to the department by a school official, officer of the juvenile court, or law enforcement official;
- is homeless, as defined by Title 42 of the United States Code §11302, and its subsequent amendments; or
- resided in the preceding school year or resides in the current school year in a residential placement facility in the district, including a detention facility, substance abuse treatment facility, emergency shelter, psychiatric hospital, halfway house, or foster group home.

Student Demographics

For 2007-2008 school year, the district identified 106,126 students in grades Early Childhood through 12 who met one or more of the state criteria. The highest numbers of at-risk students were found in grades K through 3. Of these, 24% were African American, 73% were Hispanic, and 2% were white. (Figure 1). Male students represented 52% of the total, while 48% were female.

Budget

State Compensatory Education funds are authorized by the legislature to provide financial support for programs and/or services designed by districts to increase the achievement of students at-risk of dropping out of school. SCE funds may be used for costs of programs and/or services that supplement the regular education program. The 2007-2008 SCE budget, allocations, and expenditures were not available from budget staff.

District and Campus Improvement Plans

Programs funded with SCE funds are specifically designed to serve students at-risk of dropping out of school with a program placement or setting that provides special instruction or services for the period of time that the student is classified as at-risk of dropping out of school. State law requires the District/Campus Improvement Plan; it is the primary record supporting expenditures attributed to the state compensatory education program.

The district/campus improvement plans are to include a complete description of the program and describe how students are entered and exited from the temporary special program placements or settings.

The District Improvement Plan (DIP) was updated in February 2008. The DIP uses a project management
At-risk students are addressed in the plan’s sections as follows:

- **Accountability System**: Performance data for at-risk students.
- **Needs Assessment**: 2007 Performance Target results for At-Risk versus Not At-Risk and TAKS At-Risk Reading and Mathematics Gap.
- **Glossary and Appendices**: A table that lists the state criteria for identification of at-risk students with the district interpretation for each.
- **Parent and Community Involvement**: Two steps list provision of services to “at-risk” students through mentoring programs.
- **Fiscal Management**: Provision of supplemental services with SCE funds for students identified as at-risk; provision of innovative programs and efforts for improved student performance; and monitoring to ensure SCE funds remain supplemental (resources for this step are listed as $66,000,000 and 1.0 FTE).
- Cites completion of the development of an on-line performance management system for monitoring, tracking, and updating the action plans.
- **Resources**: A budget form to be completed by campuses supporting expenditures attributed to the state compensatory education program.
- The campus improvement plans include the SCE funds allocated for resources, and staff to address the needs of at-risk students for improved student performance.

**Achievement**

The district is required to use the TAKS and other student achievement test results to design programs to increase the achievement of students who have not performed satisfactorily or are at-risk of dropping out of school.

TAKS reading passing rates for at-risk students were lowest at grade four for all groups. Grade 4 African American at-risk students had the lowest passing rate of 47% while grades eight and 11 white students had the highest passing rate of 93%. All grade 11 non-at-risk students outperformed all grade 11 at-risk students. In TAKS reading, the largest gap between at-risk and not-at-risk students was for Hispanics at 18.3%.

In mathematics, grade nine African American at-risk students had the lowest TAKS passing rate (21%), while Hispanic grade five (82%) at-risk students had the highest passing rate. The largest gap occurred in mathematics at grade nine where there was a 54% difference in the passing rates between white at-risk and not-at-risk students. The smallest gap of 5% was at grade eight between white at-risk and not-at-risk students. The largest TAKS achievement gap between at-risk and not-at-risk students occurred in mathematics for African American students with 37.4%. Overall, the achievement gap between all at-risk and not-at-risk students was 30.9% in mathematics and 17.8% in reading.

**Graduation Rates**

Overall, not at-risk students are graduating at a higher rate than students classified as at-risk students at rates of 97% and 78% respectively. Of those, 81% were African American, 76% were Hispanic, and 85% were white.

**Summary**

A review of the on-line version revealed that the paper copy of the plan provided and used for this report do not match.

The district’s plan was not specific on the following:

- comprehensive program description with, target population entry/exit procedures, and implementation of funded programs.
- strategies for academic improvement of at-risk students based are aligned with the needs assessment.
- total allocation for resources and staff. (1.0 FTE was not filled.)
- complete information on financial resources. (No SCE references in the action plans resource sections other than Fiscal Management; Parent and Community (resources column reads “$TBD”-unclear if SCE funded).
- measurable performance objectives for reduction of reading and math achievement gap for at-risk students.
- formative (periodic) evaluation criteria.
- summative (cumulative) evaluation criteria that shows when the objectives are met.
- updates of the action plans for at-risk student services.

SCE requires that the DIP describe SCE programs if the focus of the SCE program is district wide. The DIP should comply with SCE requirements. The district should consider identifying a program coordinator to oversee that the intent, purposes, and requirements of the SCE program are met including compliance with requirements that budget allocations and expenditures are supplemental and can be tracked back to SCE. Responsibilities should include (but not limited) monitoring entry and exit of students, at-risk student services (districtwide and campus), and ensuring SCE programs/services funded produce the desired results for at-risk students or are redirected.

For more information, see EA08-301-2, available at www.dallasisd.org/inside_disd/depts/evalacct/, or contact Lydia Hernández at 972-925-6445.